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No. 7.

REPORTS OF THE NATIONAL WAR COMMITTEE

OF THE CITIZENS OF NEW-YORK.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. ANDREW JACKSON HAMILTON, OF TEXAS,

Late Representative of Texas, in the 36th Congress,

ON THE

Condition of the South under Rebel Rule,

AND THE NECESSITY OF EARLY RELIEF

TO THE

UNION MEN OF WESTERN TEXAS.

[REPORTED BY A. F. WARBURTON, STENOGRAPHER, 117 NASSAU-STREET.]

IN response to an invitation of the National War Committee, the Hon. A. J. Hamilton, the eloquent Union refugee from Texas, delivered an address in the large hall of Cooper Institute, on Friday evening, October 3d, 1862. The hall was densely filled. Hon. Hiram Walbridge, chairman of the committee of arrangements, called the meeting to order. He said:

Fellow-citizens: The National War Committee has assigned to me the duty of calling to order this vast, patriotic and intelligent assemblage. Without office, without honors, without emoluments, without patronage, they find their authority only in the rectitude of their intentions, in the imminence of the public danger, and they rely with confidence on the regard and esteem of their countrymen. No sane man believes that this gigantic rebellion, which fairly shakes the earth be-

neath our feet, can ever be quelled, unless the Federal government shall furnish opportunity for the loyal patriotic Union men of the South to demonstrate their valor, their intrepidity, and their devotion to the Constitution, the Union and the supremacy of law. That Constitution and the government it guarantees sprung from the hearts of the American people. It was baptized in their blood, and it will be defended by their hands, so long as treason shall seek to ignore the flag, which has borne the glories of the American character into every part of the habitable globe. I nominate, gentlemen, as presiding officer, our eminent chief magistrate, the Hon. George Opdyke.

Mayor Opdyke said: My friends, we are here to listen to a distinguished citizen of the South, a friend of the Union and of the old flag, who has been compelled to flee from the iron despotism which the Confederate traitors have established. It is rarely that we are favored with an opportunity of obtaining information from that region from a source at once so trustworthy, so enlightened and so eloquent. The orator of the evening is a gentleman of distinguished social position and eminent public service, having represented his State in the Congress of the United States with marked ability; and I trust the day is not far distant, when he will again be called upon to serve his fellow-citizens in the same capacity. He will be able to portray to us, in truthful colors, the sad effects of the rebellion in his own State, as well as the wrongs and outrages that he and all other true loyalists have been compelled to suffer at the hands of its wicked authors and abettors. He will thus furnish us with fresh incentives to persevere in the contest in which we are engaged, and intensify our efforts to crush out at once and forever a usurpation that has borne such bitter fruits. I have the honor to present to you Col. Andrew Jackson Hamilton, of Texas.

ADDRESS OF MR. HAMILTON.

Fellow-citizens of the City of New-York:

Could I, by the exercise of some supernatural power, present to those I left behind me the scene upon which I now gaze, and could I bring back their answer as it would spring from every heart that throbs with loyal feeling to the government of their fathers, you would be thanked as alone is proper for this generous reception tendered, not to me, but to the cause in which, I trust, we are mutually engaged.

I remember well, as I entered your magnificent harbor a few days past, for the first time in my life, I could not but be impressed with the evidence before me of the magnitude, the progress, and the greatness of our country, as reflected by even one single spot of its territory. But there was connected with it a painful throb, and it arose from the reflection that it was now all being imperiled; and whatever you, fellow-citizens, may have supposed with regard to the progress of this rebellion, or its extent, so far as territory is concerned, or the integrity of the people of any section of the country; satisfied, as you may be in your own minds, that it cannot go beyond the States of the South, I entertain a different opinion. I mean to be understood that if it is to succeed where it is already attempted, in my humble judgment, it will not stop there; in short, that if the government of the United States, as it existed before the rebellion was attempted, is not maintained in all its integrity, we may look forward to a period, perhaps not so remote that some present will not see it, when it will give way here as well. It is not because of any distrust I feel as to your loyalty of heart at this moment. It is not because of any want of men or means to prosecute the war. It is still less on account of any supposed defect of your general intelligence, or want of general intelligence among the masses of the people here. But, as I have had occasion to remark elsewhere, the moral effect and power exercised by the name of the government of the United States, and the feeling which has pervaded every heart that loved free government, here and elsewhere, and the hopes of its

perpetuity and capacity to maintain itself, based, as it is, upon the intelligence and loyalty of its people, will have been lost, and lost for ever. In short, if the government of the United States fails to crush this first attempt at rebellion against its just authority, you must rest assured it is not the last effort that will be made; because, he that supposes that a government will exist, (until the character of man is changed,) containing no citizen within its limits who would, for selfish purposes, disrupt or tear it down, imagines what is an impossibility. There can be no such government. There cannot be one so free; there cannot be one so paternal; there cannot be one so exalted and so full of blessings for man, as that there will not be some men who, for the purpose of temporary elevation, to gratify personal ambition, would willingly, gladly tear it down.

Encouragement, it is unnecessary to argue, has been already given to the rebellion by its having progressed so long, and because, too, of the powerful effort made to make it successful, far beyond what many intelligent men in the country supposed possible, within the compass of those States engaged in it.

ORIGIN OF THE REBELLION.

But, fellow-citizens, it is our duty to inquire now what caused the rebellion; and, ascertaining that fact, we will understand better how to apply a remedy to prevent a recurrence of the same thing: in short, we shall take care it shall not originate again from the same cause.

I have not the time, fellow-citizens, to explain how the masses in the Southern States were controlled by the few—for they were the few—who engaged in the effort to disrupt the government of the United States. I know at the first blush it seems strange that a large majority should be controlled, coerced, cowed, overcome and trodden down by an inferior number, in reference to the highest interests and the fairest hopes possessed by the majority; and yet it is true. They were deluded, many of them; they were outwitted, many of them. They were made to believe that secession would necessarily compel the people of the North to hasten

to extend to them further security for Southern institutions, or rather one Southern institution. That was the argument. It is true, fellow-citizens, that the largest portion of the people of the South were not personally interested in the institution ; but they were as " loyal," (to use a favorite expression in the South,) they were as loyal to that institution as those who were personally interested in it. They were as ready to aid in its preservation ; they were as ready to resist attacks from within or from without as others ; and they had been made to believe that there were aggressions that were annoying, which, if they progressed from year to year, and were continued in, would bring serious trouble, and they were anxious to avoid it. They loved the government of the United States, and if the proposition had been seriously made to the people of the South to go out of the Union, with a view of remaining out, I doubt if a solitary State, save and except South Carolina, would have ventured upon the experiment.

To give you an evidence of this fact, the candidates for the convention in the State of Texas, in their printed addresses, without exception, so far as I knew them, argued the necessity of immediate action, with a view to early reconstruction. They went before the people, pledging themselves that they were in favor of reconstruction, and desired to adopt that measure as a means of securing their rights under the government of the United States, which they believed could not be secured in any other way. But, fellow-citizens, with all that, the majority of the people were not deceived. One-third only of the popular vote of the State of Texas was cast in that election, testing the sense of the people, or pretending to test it, as to their desire to sever their connection with the United States. Two-thirds of the body politic believed it their duty to stand aloof from the thing, to give it no recognition, fearing it would be an implied recognition of the regularity of the proceeding even to go to the polls and cast a vote. It is easy to see, then, how the proposition to secede was carried at the ballot-box.

Another thing you cannot realize as I do. After the ordinance of secession had been enacted, they really did not believe the fact, that they were out of the Union of their fathers.

They seemed to regard it as one of those temporary upheavings of popular excitement, which would pass away as all others they had witnessed had passed away; that it was a species of madness that would run out and spend its force, and that reason would resume its sway over the minds of the people.

SLAVERY ANTAGONISTIC TO DEMOCRACY.

But, fellow-citizens, they failed to understand the object; they failed to comprehend the spirit at the bottom of this movement. They did not know that the darling object in the hearts of these men was not merely to cut loose from the non-slaveholding States of the Union, not merely to cease agitation on the subject of slavery in the government under which the institution existed, but it was to create a new order of government, one not resembling that from which they had severed. It was, in short, fellow-citizens, *to depress the masses and to elevate the few*. No intimation was given by those engaged in it, because in some shape the name of the people that were sought to be depressed, that were sought to be deprived of their birthright, must be used. If what has been said since secession has been accomplished, if the declarations of their leading men, made within the last twelve months, had been offered from an authoritative source by some man taking a leading part in the rebellion, when first inaugurated, it would have been crushed and strangled at home upon the very spot where it first had its origin.

No man then dared to say to the people, "this thing of democracy will not do. This thing of republican government is a failure. This thing of men without property participating in government, being represented in the political department of the government, is a failure!" I say, no man uttered sentiments like these until the thing had been accomplished, and until it had been accomplished so far that the arms of the people of the country were in the hands of the conspirators, until the powder and the lead, the means to resist, were lost to them; until, in short, they were bound, and could make no resistance. Then, and not till then, you could hear it upon the streets, in the hotels, at the social board, in the parlor, every-

where you went, "Republican government is a failure! We want a stronger government; we intend to have a stronger government. We will steer clear of the danger emanating from the democratic masses, who are wielding, in fact, the power of the government of the United States."

The argument of Mr. SPRATT, of South Carolina, is the popular argument now with every man in the South who is indoctrinating the public mind. They know that the masses will never be in love with it. But what care they for them? There are some who have engaged in secession who are not prepared for this, but they must be indoctrinated. You perceive, say these men, it is a failure. Why? Because the United States government has failed, and it failed on account of democracy. Says Mr. Spratt, "you have failed in Montgomery in incorporating the provision to re-open the African slave-trade, and from that evidence I see you are likely to make a failure in establishing the government we intended when we severed from the United States." "I am ashamed," says he, "of any man South, who aspires to the name of a statesman, who supposes that the cause of our separation was in consequence of aggression by the North on the slave-power." And he adds, "the great New-York statesman, WM. H. SEWARD, never uttered a truer sentiment, than when he said there was an *irrepressible conflict*. It is true; it is philosophically true. *We must get rid of the people of the North, because they are democratic in the organization of their society.* The working-men in the non-slaveholding States are the power in the government. They vote at the ballot-box, and they are vastly in the majority." "All power in the government, when properly conducted, (he says,) must rest in the *head* of society. The head of society is composed of the men who direct labor. It will fail if placed in the heels of society, which are constituted of the laboring masses." "In short," says Mr. Spratt, "you perceive from the premises *that slavery and democracy cannot live together.*" "We have not accomplished the object of separation," he adds. "You are already backing down from it; you are afraid, perhaps, that the people will not bear it. If you shrink from it now, it will involve the necessity of another revolution, and

we will have it, although it should be bloodier than this, in which we shall accomplish the great, the leading, *the only object we had in this—getting rid of the last and least remains of democracy in our own midst.*” And then, in order that he might not be misunderstood by any one, added, “*We must have a slave aristocracy.*”

This was a letter addressed to the Hon. Mr. Perkins, of Louisiana, who was sitting in the convention in Alabama. It was published in the *Charleston Mercury*, reproduced among the leading journals of the South, and commented upon favorably ; and to this good hour no man has lifted up his voice against it throughout all rebeldom, that I have heard. No man in his paper, or in a public address, has done so. Indeed, now there are no other sentiments published than those closely following the leading of Mr. Spratt.

“We must have a stronger government.” The only reply that I ever made to these arguments, as long as I was permitted to hear them, was simply this : “Gentlemen, by the time you have got through with Uncle Sam, you will think, perhaps, it is strong enough for common use.”

HOW THE REBELLION IS TO BE CRUSHED.

I desire to be brief. Allow me to pass rapidly on, for I find I will consume too much of your valuable time to-night. [Cries of “No, no—go on.”] Having ascertained the cause of the rebellion, the question arises, and the only one with which we ought to deal : How is that rebellion to be crushed ? and how are we to see to it that the cause of that rebellion shall never bring forth the same bitter fruit ?

In giving you my humble views, let me preface them by saying, that two years past I was what I suppose would have been called a “loyal” man to the institution of slavery, although greatly suspected by them. I dreaded to see, what I believed inevitable at some distant period, the conflict between slavery and democracy. I never doubted but it would come, but I was selfish enough, I will admit, to hope it would not be in my day, or during the period of my children’s lives. I did not perceive how I, with my humble

powers, could eradicate the evil, if I had thought proper to engage in the work. I rested in the comfortable reflection that it having been permitted by Providence to grow up, doubtless for some wise, but, to us, inscrutable purpose, that same Providence would look to it that it would be disposed of also in accordance with the will of the Great Ruler of the universe.

I never would have quarreled with the men who owned that property. Indeed, I would have assisted in protecting them in their legal rights to retain it, so long as it was an institution under the laws and constitution of the respective States where it existed. But the very moment it sought to tear away from me the only protection I have ever had, or hope to leave my posterity—the flag of my fathers—for the purpose of building another government upon slavery, as its chief corner-stone—that moment I changed my relations to the institution of slavery; and I warned them in advance, that they would make me, what I had felt was an unmerited reproach, when it had been hurled at me in times past—an *abolition sympathizer*. I told them they would make me, not merely a *sympathizer*, but they would make me an *active, practical abolitionist*.

I told them more; I said to them, “the moment you enter upon this experiment you have already drawn a line; you have dug a gulf—an impassable one, between yourselves and the non-slave owners of the South. You do not realize it now, but I know that you do not make the new government a liberal one. You can never do it, for the simple reason, that the men who are deluded by you to-day will not have experienced the blessings of this new government for two years, until they will want no man to reason with them, for the purpose of proving that the old was the better government. Their experience will have taught it to them. They will find themselves disrobed of their birthright. You will limit the right of suffrage. You will require property qualification. You know that I know you intend to do it. When you have done that, will you allow these men you have disfranchised to have arms, a right guaranteed to them under the constitution of the United States? You dare not do it. The strong

“arms and stout hearts of this people would crush you in one single day, the moment the scales drop from their eyes, and they see they are no longer free men, if you do not keep them in your grasp. That being the truth, it is impossible for you to make this a liberal government. You cannot do it. You will then have challenged every lover of freedom throughout the world, to resist a government built upon slavery, for the purpose of elevating the slave-owners, at the expense of the aggregated millions. Can you sustain slavery under such circumstances? You have already destroyed it, in my judgment; and if you have not destroyed it by the moral force brought against it, I would actively war with you, while my life lasts, to reclaim the freedom of my children at the expense of your negroes, and slavery based upon them.”

INUTILITY OF CONCILIATION.

I fear there are those all over the country who still believe that by some peace measure, by some conciliatory step on the part of the government, these disloyal States can be reclaimed. No greater fallacy can creep into the mind of man. Why, fellow-citizens, the loyal masses of the South need no conciliation. They demand none; but they are this night sending up their prayers to the Great Ruler of the universe for aid and assistance to come back to the Union unconditionally. They have not the new government in their hands, however. They have no power to give direction to its policy. Who, then, are you to conciliate in order to cause the rebellion to cease? Jefferson Davis. Ah! he will ask you, “will you allow me to be made President of the United States, ever?” If not, you have not given the first reason on earth why he can be conciliated. Are you willing, in short, to place him back in the same social and political status that he occupied before he inaugurated this rebellion? If you are, I am not. I do want to see the old government, when it shall have re-asserted its authority and power, make a wise and just discrimination between the guilty and the deluded. I do want the real responsible traitors punished, but I would have the

down-trodden, the suffering, the ignorant, (if you will,) who have been made instruments in the hands of these vile men, brought back. Let them come,—although they may have aided in secession,—come back, like the prodigal son, and forgive them.

If we cannot conciliate these men, then, fellow-citizens, what can we do? Need I ask such an auditory as this? Is it possible—shall history record it—that twenty-seven millions of free men and women, and children, have not the moral and physical power to strangle treason in the hands of fifteen hundred thousand? Is Republicanism to fail, because twenty-seven millions are not sufficiently conscious of their duty to themselves, to the government of their fathers, to humanity the wide world over, to realize that this rebellion can alone be crushed by physical force? I have not a doubt but that peace propositions will come from the Confederate government; but they will not come in the shape of an unconditional proposition, to cease hostilities, and resume their old position in the government of the United States, leaving all their citizens with the same rights that they had under the old Constitution. They will not come in that shape. We have seen, already, from particular presses, what would be the conditions upon which hostilities would be abandoned; but I do not believe we have seen in the papers what would emanate from the cabinet (if I may be allowed to use the expression) at Richmond. It must be something more than that. They never will yield the idea of building up a government in which their power will be perpetuated. And why? Because they know if the government of the United States shall, in its mercy, pardon their offences, and restore them to their rights under the Constitution, that their own fellow-citizens, who have been their victims, would spurn them away, and they would be as effectually cut off from all future power as if they were convicted for high treason. They never will do it; and the very desperation with which they now struggle ought to prove to you, and to the world, that they will never stop while they can get men to bleed. They will never cease to fight as long as there is a hope of success, for it is the only hope of salvation to them.

They have not at heart, as you have,—they do not feel for the sufferings of their wives and children that are made widows and orphans by this unholy war. It has never entered the mind of one man engaged in this rebellion, who understood its object, to shed a single tear for all the suffering that has been brought upon the country. They did know it would involve bloodshed; they did know it would involve misery and woe; but the object was dearer to their hearts than any other in life; they had solemnly determined to make the venture; and having made it, they are cut off from all sympathy with men that love free government the wide world over; and they must, if they occupy a position that gives them respectability in the future, occupy it in a government not such as this.

Now, fellow-citizens, if you think such men can be conciliated or brought back to a love of the government they have so much wronged; if you believe they can ever live in good neighborhood with you whom they have so much abused by word and deed, you are more deluded than even the poor miserable people of the South, who were made to believe that the new government would be a new Jerusalem. No! *The war must be prosecuted. The rebellion must be put down.* It must be put down by bayonets, by powder and ball, by brave hearts and strong arms.

SECESSION ONCE ACKNOWLEDGED WILL SPREAD.

It is not, fellow-citizens, because I have suffered; it is not because thousands upon thousands of my fellow-citizens are suffering—not for that alone that I beg you to engage earnestly in this work. It is true, had I not suffered, had I not witnessed suffering, I might not, and would not, in all human probability, have been so earnest in my feelings. We are all sufficiently selfish, and I am no exception. It is on your own account, as well as mine and those similarly situated, that I ask you to make an earnest effort to put down this rebellion at an early day.

If secession is an accomplished fact, and the government

that has resulted from it an established government among the nations of the earth, do you believe that secession will stop there? Are there not men even in the Empire State, in your goodly city, who would listen to the whisperings of treason at some future day, proposing to withdraw New-York from the remaining States of the Union? There may be no such man in all New-York; but I would dislike exceedingly to think that my hopes for the future depended on the fact of their being no such man. And in saying this, I do not question the loyalty of the great heart of New-York. Never. I mean that man, even here in New-York, has not attained to human perfectability. There are men, doubtless, here, who would be willing to be the great particular magnet of the age in New-York, at the expense of the government at Washington. It is certain to my mind. It is one of those propositions which, it seems to me, require no argument to enforce them upon the minds of others, that, when once it is established that it is a possible and practicable thing to tear States, bound together by the bonds of Union, asunder, there will be men tugging at it continuously, day by day, and year by year; and I ask you if you will have the same confidence that their efforts can be successfully resisted? No, fellow-citizens; and you may be brought even to doubt whether or not, in order to escape anarchy at last, you, too, had not better have a "stronger government."

There is safety, there is hope for us, for our children and for fallen humanity throughout the world, in the preservation of the government of our fathers; there is confidence in the flag that floats over the soil of New-York to-day. But when the one shall have been destroyed, and the other be trailing in the dust, who again will have confidence in republican government? Can we make a better government than our fathers have made, or than we have inherited? Will there ever another government exist that can, in half a century, accomplish more than this has accomplished? Will the sun ever shine upon another government, with thirty millions of people, all so prosperous and happy? Never. Then your hopes are bound up in this government, with mine. If the integrity of the constitution and the laws of this government

are not to be exercised and felt upon the territory of my State, my hopes are buried. If you see them fail there, you know it is not an impossible thing for them to fail here. There being safety, then, in the one course, and, at the very least, doubt, uncertainty and gloom in the other, who will hesitate in making his choice?

SUFFERINGS OF UNION MEN IN TEXAS.

You have not, fellow-citizens, felt as others have been compelled to feel, the effects of this revolution. It has not been yours to realize that you were already less than free men. The right of free speech, thank God! I realize is here to-night. The dignity of manhood is here. It is felt and exercised under the blessings of *a government that elevates the masses* instead of *depressing them*. I, fellow-citizens, have stood upon my own hearth and felt that I was a degraded man—for no wrong or crime that I had done—but I was degraded because I was a son of the South, and the people that I had lived with so long and loved so much, had forfeited their birthright, and had torn mine away from me without the power to resist, and I had not the courage to make myself a martyr. I have been compelled, like hundreds of others, (and I beg your pardon for mentioning myself,) to leave my home; and home is dear. Need I address myself to fathers, to mothers, to say how dear it is? I was obliged to leave home, and that under circumstances that would have been painful even if peace pervaded the land. The Angel of Death had left the shadow of his wing upon my threshold. The brightest gem in my household jewels had dropped away. But why should I be permitted to weep, with my wife and babes, over the tomb of my dear little daughter? I, an old wretch, so they styled me, who dared to tell the people that he loved the government of his fathers; that his hopes for himself and his children centred in the Constitution and flag of his government; who had dared, in the halls of the United States Congress, to act upon the old and discarded theory, that the solemn oath he took to support the Constitution, and to legislate to the best of his humble skill and ability for the



good of the whole people of the United States, should be observed, and who, when he returned, pointed at others who had taken a similar oath, and who had prostituted the power placed in their hands by high and dignified office, to enable them to violate successfully that oath! I had done too much to be permitted to live peaceably at home. I had robbed no man in the land. There were those there whom, in trying times, I had fed, and they were among the first to cry "Crucify him! hang him, the villainous traitor!"

In Mexico, at this moment, there are, perhaps, five hundred men who have left as I have left. They are scattered from here to Mexico. They are in the mountain fastnesses, hiding like wolves, and being hunted down like wolves. Are they to have help, or are they to be left helpless? They love their government. Oh! give them a chance, and I pledge myself here to-night they will bleed for it—they will die for it—they will help to redeem it; and there are men enough there to-day to redeem it, if they were organized, and with arms in their hands.

VIGOROUS PROSECUTION OF THE WAR.

Then, fellow-citizens, determine that this war is to be vigorously prosecuted, until there is not a traitor from Maine to Mexico; until we compel the men who will not obey and love our virtuous and glorious government, to go where they properly belong. Let them seek some other land, where republican government is yet a dream or a hope; let them go where despotism is triumphant—where they can utter their foul denunciations of all that is good, of all that is ennobling in the human character, and find sympathy and affiliation and affinity with those who have been all the days of their lives engaged in treading down the liberties and the interests of the human race. Let no man be permitted to live in the government who will dare again to strut his little hour upon the stage, and preach treason to his fellow-men.

Restore the government, its Constitution and its laws, to all our fellow-citizens—with all my heart. Restore the Union as it existed in the disloyal sections for the year just preceding the rebellion—God forbid!

Am I to be remitted back to the soil of Texas, to be hunted by assassins the little remnant of my life? Am I to go there to teach my little son that the chief blessing of his great future is to run from street to street, and from man to man, and insist that he is as sound a man upon this subject of slavery as lives? Am I to see my neighbors and friends hung by the neck, or shot down like beasts, because they have doubted that the chief business of the Great Ruler of the universe is not in directing and controlling, and maturing and perpetuating the institution of slavery! No, fellow-citizens; if I cannot go there, and strike hands with my friends at home; if I cannot be again united with my family, except upon the terms that I am to live in such society as it has existed there—hard as it is to utter—I can find it in my heart to say, let me never see them. But if you mean by the restoration of the Union as it was, a restoration of that Union such as our fathers intended it to be, then, with all my heart, let us have it. The issue is simple; it is plain. The wayfaring man must read it as he runs, though he be a fool—*slavery, on the one hand, and liberty on the other*. And yet, fellow-citizens, for these brief desultory words, honestly spoken, I am yet to be further tried. Friends, doubtless, who have stood up for me hitherto, will say they are not prepared for this yet. But I fear not for them; they will arrive in due time where I stand; and I will add, even at the expense of being considered arrogant, if you please, that what I have said to-night, all uninteresting as it may be to you, will strike a chord deep in the hearts of my people. I know how the people feel, their modes of thought, and to what conclusions their minds have already been brought. They will say the choice is, “your negroes—my children. I love my children best. I do not intend to part with the hopes that I have predicated upon my little son. He ought to have had—he did have until you took it away from him—the right to aspire to the highest honors in his country’s gift. I know you intend to rob him of it. I will not suffer it. I will fight that my son may be free, even at the expense of freeing your negroes.”

Let me, then, fellow-citizens, indulge the hope, that if it

shall be my fortune again to visit home and friends, I can say, and say truthfully, "I am a freeman. I am not merely a theoretical freeman. I have the Constitution of the United States guaranteeing to me my freedom; but I have what is dearer still: I have countrymen, I have society, I have brethren, fellow-citizens, all over the State, who intend, without an exception, that I shall practice the right of a freeman throughout my life. They intend that I shall indulge the noblest right that can be given to man—the right of thought, and of impressing that thought, humble though it be, upon the minds of others. If I can go home with that kind of freedom, I want it; less than that, I shall never be satisfied with.

Let me say I now realize that I am free. There are no shackles on my mind, imposed by a class of society even more powerful than the government itself, to weigh me down beyond the power of the government to save me. Hundreds of men have perished, because they dared to think, because they loved freedom, and indulged, occasionally, in speculations as to how freedom was best to be preserved. They have been hung like felons. I wish that to cease. I want the government of the United States to treat every man in the land as its enemy, as a convicted felon, who will attempt to impose further restrictions upon the right of a free people to think and to talk.

When I see that, then I can lift my hands, and say: "Blessed, indeed, is this government! I realize how fully, how entirely, it has made me what man should be in respect of his rights in the presence of his fellow men." Then, indeed, I can gaze with fond eyes upon that flag, as I did when, fleeing from persecution, and perhaps death, I first saw it float upon the broad Atlantic. I can accept it as the emblem of freedom really, unqualifiedly; having gained new lustre by the very struggle in which its citizens are engaged to-day.

I will indulge the hope, fellow-citizens, that victory upon the field will not only perch upon every standard of our noble armies, but that a moral halo will surround the flag which is borne victorious, from the consciousness of those who fight that they are struggling to sustain liberty, and to

crush the last remains of treason. Then, indeed, our latest thought upon government and society shall be: "I am yet the citizen of a free government; I still occupy the position of a recipient of the largest rational human liberty; I am yet on freedom's soil, with freedom's banner floating o'er me."

Mr. Hamilton concluded amid hearty and prolonged applause.

RESOLUTION OF THANKS.

The Hon. Hiram Walbridge offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That the earnest and cordial thanks of the loyal citizens of New-York are hereby tendered to Colonel Hamilton, for his clear, concise and thorough exposition of the infamy of the present wicked rebellion, and that it is the duty of the Federal government, at the earliest practicable moment, to furnish such aid to the loyal Union men of the South as will enable them to again enjoy all the blessings of representative constitutional government.

The Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, in seconding the resolution, said:

Mr. Mayor, I second this resolution with all my heart, and you will allow me, fellow-citizens, to say, that never in all my life have I been more happy not to have been a "conditional" Union man than to-night. We have listened to a Southern slaveholder, who is not a rebel, and that Southern slaveholder turns out to be an abolitionist.

The one indispensable thing for this government to do, as intimated in the resolution offered for your acceptance, is to march with even front—a front all grim with cannon, and all gleaming with steel—over the whole Southern territory, acre by acre; and these loyal millions, which must be launched on this disloyal soil, will see what Providence, by better discipline, has been slowly teaching us, and what the

orator of the evening has made so plain, that this Satanic Power which we must hurl into the dust, sits enthroned on a sacred stone, which is as black as night ; and while our gleaming bayonets move straight on, let us invoke the hammer of the God THOR to smite into powder that black pedestal upon which our satanic enemy sits enthroned.

The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the meeting adjourned.

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Citizens of New-York.

JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS, Jr.,
Secretary.

New-York, October 4, 1862.

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